## REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 13, 2004 (Paper No. 7). Claims 1-25 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 3, 5, and 22-25 are in independent form. The claims have not been amended.

Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-13, 15, 18 and 21-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from U.S. Patent 5,821,747 (Kayano et al.) in view of U.S. Patent 5,610,725 (Kawada et al.). In addition, Claim 2, along with Claims 4, 10 and 14, was rejected under Section 103(a) as being obvious from *Kayano* in view of *Kawada* and further in view of U.S. Patent 5,933,584 (Maniwa), and Claims 16, 17, 19 and 20 were rejected under Section 103(a) as being obvious from *Kayano* in view of *Kawada* and U.S. Patent 6,226,095 (Fukuta).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections is requested in view of the following comments.

Independent Claim 1 specifies, among other important features:

> "a storage unit adapted to store image data and operation mode data"

and

> "an operation mode update unit adapted to automatically update the operation mode of the first image-forming apparatus to an operation mode in accordance with the acquired operation mode data" (underlining added).

The significance of these recitations is that they permit an immediate printout of images in a correct operation mode (e.g. number of copies, one- or double-sided printing, sorting, reduction layout, size of original documents, sheet size of copy sheets, etc.) from a non-

functioning copier machine or from a copier machine which is in use. This is because both the image data and the operation mode data are retrieved together from the in-use or non-functioning machine and are supplied together to another machine which can be used. The operation mode data then sets the other machine to print the image according to its corresponding operation control data, i.e. with the proper number of copies, single or double sided copies reduction layout, etc.

Applicant strongly asserts that nothing has been found, or pointed out, in *Kayano* that would disclose either a storage unit which stores "operation mode data", or an "operation mode update unit which automatically updates operation mode of the first (i.e. the acquiring) image-forming apparatus to an operation mode in accordance with the acquired operation mode data." Instead, the *Kayano* apparatus uses a master-slave arrangement wherein the master machine looks for a slave machine whose operation mode happens to correspond to that which the master requires for the particular image to be printed. When the master finds such a slave machine, the master sends the image information to it.. It is not possible for *Kayano*'s slave machines to print out any information from the master machine until the particular slave machine is selected by the master and receives image and operation mode from the master. With a system constructed in accordance with Claim 1, on the other hand, any machine in the network can retrieve image information from any other machine and print it out according to the operation mode stored in the other machine.

*Kayano*'s device does not store "operation mode data". Instead, as pointed out in col. 3, lines 38-54, of that patent, the slave machines receive and send "status" information,

i.e. the ability of the slave machine to carry out printing in a particular manner.. Further, as stated in col. 6, lines 41-60, of *Kayano*, the copying machines store image information and they send and receive "status" information. However, they do not send "operation mode data", (e.g. number of copies, one- or double-sided printing, sorting, reduction layout, size of original documents, sheet size of copy sheets, etc.) as claimed by applicant. *Kayano*'s "status information" is not "operation mode data".

*Kawada* also is not seen to disclose "operation mode data" which is stored with image data in another image forming apparatus. Instead the *Kawada* system checks to see whether a remote apparatus is using a proper control panel and, if not, a different control panel is used. The control panel is not an operation mode update unit, and is certainly not the claimed "operation mode data".

Therefore, no combination of *Kayano* with *Kawada*, even assuming such a combination would even be a permissible one, would meet the terms of Claim 1.

The other references have been considered and it is submitted that none of them disclose what is missing from *Kayano* and *Kawada*, namely, a data acquisition unit which acquires the image data and the operation mode data stored in another image forming apparatus.

For the foregoing reasons it is submitted that Claim 1 patentably distinguishes from the references and is allowable.

Claim 2 is dependent on claim 1 and incorporates the patentably distinguishing recitations of that claim. Claim 2 is therefore allowable.

As mentioned, Claim 2, along with Claims 4, 10 and 14, was rejected under Section 103(a) as being obvious from *Kayano* in view of *Kawada* and further in view of *Maniwa*.

*Maniwa* was cited only as showing erasing of image data after it is printed out, and in fact, is not seen to disclose the above discussed storage and transmission of operation mode data together with image data. Thus, Claim 2, which is dependent on Claim 1, is patentable for the reasons given for Claim 1.

Claim 3, similar to Claim1, specifies, among other important features:

> "a data acquisition unit through which a first image forming apparatus acquires, through the network communication unit, the image data and the operation mode data stored in another image-forming apparatus."

Therefore, for the same reasons as presented above in connection with Claim 1, Claim 3 patentably distinguishes over the references and is allowable.

Claim 4 is dependent on Claim 3 and incorporates the patentably distinguishing recitations of that claim. Claim 4 is therefore allowable.

Claim 5 specifies, among other important features:

> "an acquisition unit adapted to acquire, via the data communication medium, data output by the remote image-forming apparatus in response to the data request, the data including operation mode data preset for the series of image data stored and to be printed in the remote image forming apparatus" (underlining added).

As pointed out in connection with Claim 1 the cited references fail to disclose the transmission of operation control data together with image data to be printed. Thus, for the reasons given above, Claim 5 patentably distinguishes from the references and is allowable.

Claims 6-21 are dependent on Claim 5 and incorporate the patentably distinguishing recitations of that claim. In this regard, it is submitted that even if *Fukuta* is deemed to show all that it is cited for, and even if the proposed combination of that patent with the other art of record is assumed to be a permissible one, the result would not provide what is

missing from the art discussed above, as references against Claim 5. Claims 6-21, therefore, are also allowable.

Claim 22 is a method claim for controlling an image-forming system. Claim 22 specifies, among other important features, the step of :

> "acquiring the image data and the operation mode data stored in another image forming apparatus into a first image -forming apparatus through the network communication unit" (underlining added)

None of the cited references discloses the acquisition of both image data and operation control data which is stored in another image-forming apparatus. Accordingly for the same reasons given above in regard to the other claims, Claim 22 patentably distinguishes over the references and is allowable.

Claim 23 is a claim for a computer-readable storage medium which stores a software program which includes, among other important features, the step of

> "acquiring the image data and the operation mode data stored in another image forming apparatus into a first image -forming apparatus through the network communication unit" (underlining added)

Thus, for the same reasons as given in connection with Claim 21, Claim 23 patentably distinguishes from the references and is allowable.

Claim 24 is a method claim which specifies, *inter alia*, the step of:

> "acquiring, via the data communication medium, data output by the remote image-forming apparatus in response to the data request, the data including operation mode data preset for the series of image data stored and to be printed in the remote image forming apparatus."

As can be seen, Claim 24 also calls for the storage medium to store both the image data and the operation mode data which are acquired by the remote image-forming apparatus. This feature is not shown or suggested by any of the references; and accordingly

Claim 24 patentably distinguishes from the references and is allowable.

Claim 25 is directed to a computer-readable storage medium which has a program stored thereon. The program includes, among other important features, the step of:

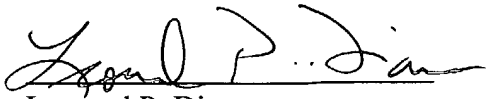
> "acquiring, via the data communication medium, data output by the remote image-forming apparatus in response to the data request, the data including operation mode data preset for the series of image data stored and to be printed in the remote image-forming apparatus."

Claim 25 also specifies that operation mode data is sent with the image data to be printed. Again, this feature is not shown or suggested by any of the references, and accordingly, Claim 25 patentably distinguishes over the references and is allowable.

It is submitted, for the reasons given above, that all of the claims of this application patentably distinguish over the references and are allowable. Further consideration by the Examiner and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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